

In the Claims

Please cancel Claims 40, 43, 45, and 49.

Please amend Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 20-23, 25, 36, 42, 44, 47-48, 51, 55, and 57.

Amendments to the claims are indicated in the attached "Marked Up Version of Amendments" (pages i - vi).

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Sub D17
1. (Amended) A modular in-the-ear-type hearing aid comprising:
a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, a receiver, a battery, electronics and controls, and wherein the base unit can be replaced after use; and
an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material and having a shorter useful life than the useful life of the base unit, the earmold further comprising a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use on a more frequent basis than the replacement of the base unit.
 2. (Amended) A modular hearing aid comprising:
a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, a receiver, electronics and controls; and
an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material, a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use, and the earmold comprising a battery integrated with the earmold.
 4. (Amended) A modular hearing aid comprising:
a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, electronics and controls; and
an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material, a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use, and the earmold comprising both a battery and a receiver integrated with the earmold.
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B3
Sub D1

6. (Amended) A modular hearing aid comprising:

a base unit adapted to contain any of a microphone, a battery, electronics and controls; and

an earmold removably attached to the base unit, the earmold comprising a compliant material, a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use, and the earmold comprising a receiver and a shell, the shell integrated with the earmold and the receiver housed within the shell.

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Sub D1

20. (Amended) A modular hearing aid comprising:

a base unit adapted to contain a microphone, a receiver, electronics and controls; and

an earmold comprising a compliant material integrated with a battery, the earmold having a flexible, mushroom shaped earmold tip adapted to create a seal with the bony portion of the ear canal to acoustically isolate the hearing aid base unit from acoustical vibrations created by the receiver, the earmold tip further comprising a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use.

21. (Amended) A modular hearing aid comprising:

a base unit adapted to contain a microphone and electronics; and

an earmold comprising a compliant material integrated with a battery and a receiver, the earmold having a flexible, mushroom shaped earmold tip adapted to create a seal with the bony portion of the ear canal to acoustically isolate the hearing aid base unit from acoustical vibrations created by the receiver, the earmold tip further comprising a retention mechanism for connection to the base unit such that the earmold can be connected to the base unit or removed from the base unit and replaced after use.

22. (Amended) A method for replacing an earmold of a modular in-the-ear-type hearing aid comprising the steps:
- providing a modular hearing aid having a base unit and an earmold;
 - releasing a securing mechanism between the earmold and the base unit, the securing mechanism capable of being released by a user without the use of a separate tool or instrument;
 - removing the earmold from the base unit;
 - discarding the earmold;
 - placing a second earmold onto the base unit; and
 - attaching the securing mechanism.
23. (Amended) A method for replacing a base unit of a modular hearing aid comprising the steps:
- providing a modular hearing aid having a base unit and an earmold;
 - releasing a securing mechanism between the earmold and the base unit, the securing mechanism capable of being released by a user without the use of a separate tool or instrument;
 - removing the base unit from the earmold;
 - discarding the base unit;
 - placing a second base unit onto the earmold; and
 - attaching the securing mechanism.
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25. (Amended) A flexible earmold tip for a hearing aid comprising:
- a vibration isolator portion adapted for attachment to a hearing aid, the vibration isolator portion having a receiver disposed therein and wherein the receiver includes a diaphragm adapted to vibrate in operation creating acoustical vibrations which cause the receiver to mechanically vibrate and wherein the vibration isolation portion attenuates such mechanical vibrations from the receiver.

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DI 36. (Amended) A hearing aid comprising:

a hearing aid base unit having a microphone, a battery and electronics; and
a flexible earmold tip having a vibration isolator portion, a mushroom shaped tip portion adapted to create a seal with an ear canal to acoustically isolate the hearing aid base unit from acoustical vibrations created by a receiver, and a sound bore, the vibration isolator portion enclosed by the base unit and having the receiver electrically attached to the base unit wherein the receiver includes a diaphragm adapted to vibrate in operation causing the receiver to mechanically vibrate and wherein the vibration isolation portion attenuates vibrations from the receiver, the mushroom shaped tip portion being attached to the vibration isolator portion, and the sound bore formed between the vibration isolator portion and the mushroom shaped tip portion and the sound bore providing a channel for the transfer of sound from the receiver to an ear canal of a user.

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DI 42. (Amended) A method for attenuating feedback in a hearing aid comprising:

providing a hearing aid base unit, a receiver, and a hearing aid tip having a flexible mushroom shaped tip portion and vibration isolator portion;
surrounding the receiver with the vibration isolator portion to attenuate acoustic vibrations and mechanical vibrations created by the receiver during operation;
securing the vibration isolator portion and receiver within the hearing aid base unit; and
placing the hearing aid within an ear such that the mushroom shaped tip portion creates a seal with the bony portion of the ear canal to acoustically isolate the hearing aid base unit from acoustical vibrations created by the receiver.

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DI 44. (Amended) A disposable hearing aid comprising:

a base unit having an inside portion, the base unit adapted to contain a non-replaceable component, including any of a microphone, a receiver, a battery, electronics and controls; and

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a potting material which pots at least a portion of the inside portion of the base unit, wherein the material increases the mass of the hearing aid and wherein the material attenuates vibrations created by the receiver during operation.

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47. (Amended) A method for reducing feedback in a disposable hearing aid comprising:
- providing a hearing aid having an inside portion adapted to contain a non-replaceable component, including any of a microphone, a receiver, a battery, electronics and controls;
 - potting at least a portion of the inside portion of the hearing aid with a material, thereby increasing the mass of the hearing aid;
 - attenuating vibrations created by the receiver during operation through the increased mass of the hearing aid; and
 - reducing feedback in the hearing aid by attenuating vibrations created by the receiver.

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48. (Amended) A disposable hearing aid comprising:
- a hearing aid portion wherein the hearing aid portion comprises a shell containing a battery, a receiver, a microphone and electronics;
 - a flexible core attached to the hearing aid portion, the flexible core forming a sound bore, thereby allowing sound produced by the hearing aid portion to travel to the ear canal; and
 - a compliant tip portion adapted to be inserted into an ear canal, wherein the tip portion comprises layers of fingers surrounding the flexible core and wherein the fingers are adapted to bend, twist, and interleave to form an acoustic seal in the ear canal.
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51. (Amended) A disposable hearing aid comprising:
- a hearing aid portion wherein the hearing aid portion comprises a shell containing a battery, a receiver, a microphone and electronics;
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a flexible core attached to the hearing aid portion, the flexible core forming a sound bore, thereby allowing sound produced by the hearing aid portion to travel to the ear canal; and

a compliant tip portion adapted to be inserted into an ear canal, wherein the tip material comprises a fluid-filled bladder surrounding the flexible core.

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55. (Amended) A covering for a hearing aid comprising:
an earmold comprising a compliant material;
a shell integrated with the earmold wherein the shell allows the attachment of a hearing aid base unit; and
a battery mounted within the covering and outside the hearing aid base unit.

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57. (Amended) A covering for a hearing aid comprising:
an earmold comprising a compliant material;
a shell integrated with the earmold wherein the shell allows the attachment of a hearing aid base unit; and
a receiver mounted within the covering and outside the hearing aid base unit.

REMARKS

In the present Office Action, Claims 1-50 and 55-57 were rejected and Claims 51-54 were objected to. Claims 1-2, 4, 6, and 20 have been amended to correct the informalities identified by the Examiner. Claim 25 has been amended to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph rejection. Claims 1, 20-23, 36, 42, 44, 47-48, 55, and 57 have been amended to alternatively characterize the invention. Claims 40, 43, 45 and 49 have been cancelled. No new matter has been added.

Claim 51 was objected to, and has been rewritten in independent form. As there are no rejections outstanding against Claim 51 or its dependents, Claims 52-54, it is believed that these claims are allowable.